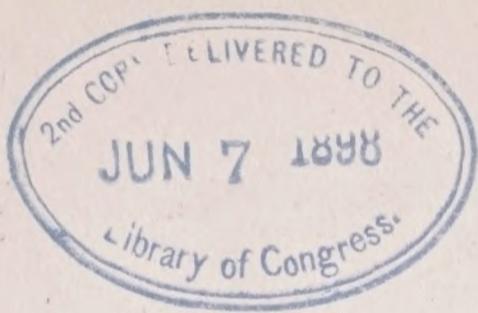


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BILLY TRILL

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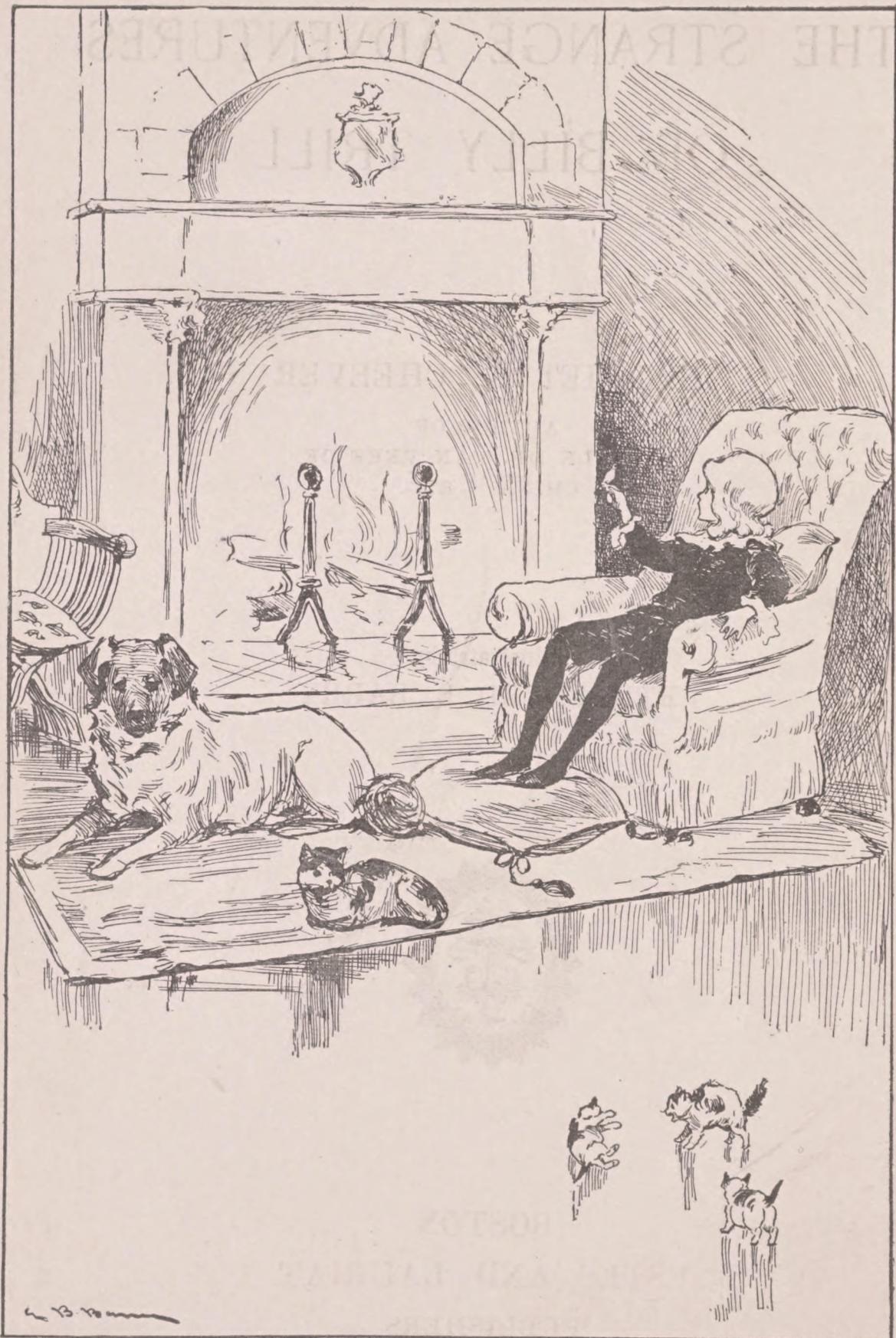
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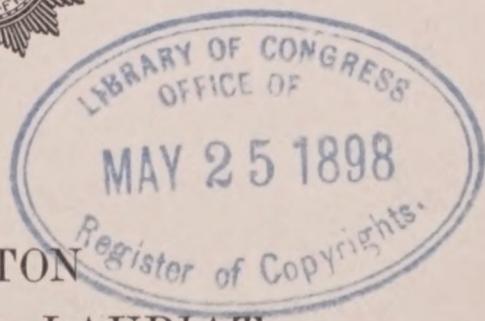


BILLY TRILL AT HOME.

# THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF BILLY TRILL

BY ✓  
HARRIET A. CHEEVER  
AUTHOR OF  
"LITTLE MR. VAN VERE OF  
CHINA," ETC.

Illustrated by  
ETHELDRED B. BARRY



BOSTON  
ESTES AND LAURIAT  
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Colonial Press:  
Electrotyped and Printed by C. H. Simonds & Co.  
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TO

*Hezekiah Butterworth*

IN GRATEFUL AND KINDLY REMEMBRANCE



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# THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF BILLY TRILL.

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## CHAPTER I.

### WHERE I CAME FROM.

SOME people call me Mr. Yellowcoat. Yet my coat is not half as yellow as what is worn by most of my family nowadays. I have pretty little cousins who are yellow as gold from the crown of the head almost to the tip of the wings, where they shade off nearly to white.

“Ah! now you have found me out, haven’t you? “A bird,” you say. Yes, a canary bird, and what is more, I was brought into this country of America from my far-off native soil.

Did you ever hear of the Canary Islands? Oh, yes, studied of them in that book with the long name that I have seen little people bending over while trying to fix the different places it tells of in what is called “the mind.” Look on your map, and in the Atlantic Ocean, between North America and Africa, but much nearer to the African coast, you will see the Canary

Isles, and, only think! we are named for the land of our birth.

Come with me for a little while and see the island called Grand Canary, one of the largest of the group. This is where I first saw the light. A great many people think "canary" simply means "yellow," because anything buff, or straw-coloured, or any such shade, is called canary-coloured.

No ; you see, tiny creature that I am, there are bits of ears tucked somewhere on my little head, and as I have learned to listen hard to what is said in my hearing, I have gathered up, oh, so many things!

So I know that, years and years ago, these were called the "Fortunate Islands." And once I heard that "canary" came from a word meaning "canine," anything belonging to a dog ; and as there are many of those barking creatures in my home, I suppose it may have been from them that our beautiful islands got their name.

Now open wide your eyes, because you will be delighted, I know, at much that you will see. Perhaps it may seem a little cold if the wind is northwest, but it is more likely to be blowing from the southeast, right over from the coast of Africa, and isn't it warm? Of course we are surrounded by water, as that is what makes any land an island, but, would you think it? we have no rivers, and sometimes water is dreadfully scarce with us,— that is, such water as one wants to drink.

The ground looks queer, doesn't it? But ever and

ever so long ago there used to come smoke, flame, and hot stones out of the tops of these mountains all around, so that the ground is uneven in places, and looks as if it had been plowed. That was done by hot lava from the burning volcanoes.

Let's fly into this high bush. You can make believe have wings and follow me for a little while. Now here is a nest made of soft moss, all lined with feathers or neatly matted hair. Here I was born. Over there is another nest, with pretty little pale blue eggs in it. Strange that yellow birds should come from pale blue eggs, isn't it?

"What funny-looking people!" you say. Yes, to you they do look strange, perhaps, but the Canary Islands belong to Spain, and the people are dark, like the Spaniards; but see what pretty eyes and hair the women have.

Was there ever a more charming garden of flowers? I have heard that there were nearly a thousand different kinds of plants and flowers in my sunny island home. And how you little people would like to try the fruits, which are of the sweetest and ripest to be found anywhere! Did you ever suck sugar-cane? Oh, I have ever so many times, and there is plenty of it here in the Canary Islands.



"HERE I WAS BORN."

Then such bananas ! Why, you think that you have eaten nice ones, but wait until you have eaten them ripened and sweetened by our hot sun and dry air. Then the dates and grapes ! We canaries know what it is to eat dates that taste like honey and syrup boiled down to a rich, thick jam ; but, dear me ! it is no use trying to describe them, or the grapes full of nectar, either.

There are many other kinds of food here, such as people use: wheat, corn, sweet potatoes, olive oil, canary grass, from which comes our canary bird seed, and the plant called tobacco. I know what men do with the tobacco leaf. They make round rolls of it, then set it afire at one end, and hold the other end in the mouth, and out comes a smoke that nearly chokes a bird. I can't begin to understand what makes men want to smoke up a little round roll of tobacco. But, then, there are a great many things a canary can see but not understand.

Just now, I told you how scarce good drinking-water sometimes was with us, but there are times when heavy storms sweep over our islands, and the salt water rushes like a torrent through the streets ; you would think the whole place was one big river. Then the water will run off, and the ground will be perfectly dry, and remain so for a long time.

You mustn't think that because we are by ourselves in the great ocean that we have no city advantages. We have men high in office from Europe, called a consul and vice-consul, and then, what seems a mighty

thing to me, there are wires under the water by which messages can be sent from our islands to either Europe on one hand or to Africa on the other.

Now, before I stop telling of this ocean island, my own Grand Canary, I must let you know something of the other birds that live here. The high trees and thick shrubs and tall cliffs are filled with little homes, and some of them are not so very little, either.

There, high midst the branches of a thick-leaved tree, sits a queer fellow with a perfect mat of soft feathers covering his tough body, and, dear me! it always scares me just to peep at his eyes. He doesn't see a thing as long as daylight lasts, but in the dark those great, staring eyes see everything. That is an owl.

Once in a while, in the dark, dark night, you will hear a half whistle and a half moan: "Too whit! too hoo! Too whit! too hoo!" and then you may know that Mr. Owl is out looking for his dinner. He swallows mice down whole, picks up a stray chicken quicker than a wink, and if any little creature tries to run through the grass, he will snap it up and whisk it down his throat or off to his nest like a flash.

Here is a strange-looking bird, large and homely. His head and neck show the bare skin, and, ugh! he isn't nice at all. He eats coarse, impure food that a boy or a canary wouldn't look at. He is called a vulture. We won't stop to make his ac-

quaintance. He looks greedy, and he is ; besides, he isn't half dressed. We don't want to know him, do we ?

Now, here is a wonderful bird. And it may be hard to believe me, because it really *is* a big story for a mite like me to tell, but this is a falcon, and he is so tremendously strong that he can fly nearly a hundred and fifty miles in an hour ! He perches, like your eagle, on a high cliff, and cares neither for tempest nor rain.

Look at that bird with the bold, saucy stare. He is full of mischief, and likes to get up a quarrel with any bird that will squabble with him. It is a magpie. Sometimes he learns to say a few words such as people use.

So much for the larger birds. We also have a rich variety of smaller ones. Jennie Wren lives here, a little bird you know well. There are many fine feathers and exquisite wings in our islands.

Now I come to our own family, the canaries. Don't smile at the word "family," for we are a very large one, I can assure you. What do you think of there being fifty varieties of canary birds ? Well, there are. I have noticed that people are fond of telling who they belong to, and what have been the family names way back with parents and grandparents.

We belong to the finch family. Some of us have been skilful in imitating the songs of other birds, and my cousins, the bullfinches, can whistle tunes

and airs such as people sing. Even the ordinary canaries have been taught regular tunes.

We feed chiefly on canary bird seed and rape seed. We dearly love chickweed, a hard-boiled egg, or a lump of sugar. Yet we have to be careful, because too many kinds of food will make us sick, and a sick canary is a very piteous little object, very piteous indeed.

It is now nearly four hundred years since some of the canary family were first taken from their native islands, and put in cages to sing in places made of wood, brick, or stone, and called "houses." But we did not look the same then as we do now. Oh, no! Our coats or feathers were of olive green, shading off to yellow. Or often they were a greenish yellow, tinged with brown. Again they were just yellow and nearly black.

And the little men of our family, oh, what beauties they were, and in their wild or natural state how they would sing! Why, in the budding, flowering season when they were choosing their mates, they would whistle and trill in a perfect whirl of ecstasy and delight, their notes going higher and higher, and growing louder and louder, until once in awhile they would actually burst the tender little vessels of the throat, and then, alas for poor canary!

But this did not often happen. And although our sisters and our little sweethearts were sweet, pleasant singers, yet they did not have the strength of lung or throat that their brothers and lovers possessed.

The longer the canaries were domesticated, which means were kept in cages and became inmates with human families, the more their showy coats paled and faded, until now far the greater part of us are dressed all in yellow; yet we little morsels of boys often sport dark spots on our wee bodies.

I am called a very handsome bird, yet I wish to say it modestly, as not for anything would I be thought vain. I once heard a little girl say to her bird, "Tweeny, you are a very vain little fellow, very vain indeed. You perk and preen and put on airs like everything."

I soon learned that vanity was a silly kind of pride. And perhaps Tweeny was vain, for he certainly did perk and preen and — yes, I think he even put on airs; but from whom do you think he learned them? Let me whisper: from no less a person than his little mistress herself!

## CHAPTER II.

### IN THE BIRD STORE.

IN speaking of being a good-looking bird a moment ago, my dress was not described, but there are reasons why it seems better to say something about it now. When we hear of friends we do not see, it is pleasant to be able to imagine how they look. So you can picture one with a little round head as yellow as gold, eyes black and bright as beads, and dark brown spots along my back and dotting my wings. Then the very tips of my wings are almost black, while my breast is so pale a yellow as to be almost white.

Please do not think me vain, but I have heard people call my colours a very pretty combination, which I know must mean a pretty mixture of shades. While I was still very young, I found what a pleasure it was to sing. And as it became easier and easier to let the strains pour forth from my throat, other birds would come to listen. Alas! I am afraid this made me truly vain. It became my habit to perch on a high, wide-spreading bush, give a long, sweet trill, then to take secret delight in watching younger birds, and older ones too, fly close at sound of the song-burst, and listen intently to the clear, wild melody.

Did you know that such little creatures as birds could show kindness to one another? Well, they can. After I had made the whole air ring with a lively carol, off would fly some of my mates that had been listening, and in a few moments back they would come, each with something in its bill. One would drop a seed before me, another a morsel of sugar-cane, another a scrap of sweet date, still another would have a grape pulp, and perhaps a bird with a strong beak would offer me a little piece of banana torn out from between the thick skin.



One day I had been singing at the top of my lungs, running up and down all kinds of notes, trilling as long as I could hold my breath, and doing my best to "show off," because I noticed how rapt

BILLY TRILL.  
two men — people, I usually call them — seemed, at what one little bird could do. They did not look like our islanders, but had white faces, and wore finely fitting clothes.

Pretty soon I saw what I thought the very prettiest little house there ever could be. It was of shining wire, and had dear little cups at the sides, one holding canary seed, the other, clear, sparkling water. As my long song had made me very thirsty, I hopped at once into the pretty house and began to

drink. Click! a little door had shut behind me; one of the men took down the pretty house,—you know all about it! how it was a cage put on the bough to catch me; and so off tramped the men, taking me with them.

It isn't well to dwell long on this part of my story. And after all, when I found myself on what was called a "vessel," and a little captive, and knew I was to be taken way off to another country, I did not feel half as badly as many birds would have, because I had no "folks" of my own. I think, if the truth were known, my father and mother had been taken, soon after I learned to fly, to the consul's house, for I never saw them after I left the nest one morning, a very little bird. Brothers and sisters I knew nothing of, so when I was put in a queer room with only little port-holes to let in the light, and saw that over a hundred other birds were being transported — which means carried from one country to another — with me, it all seemed great fun, and I was prepared to enjoy it.

But you see there are two sides to anything of that kind. In my wild, sweet woods all was gay and free as the sunshine and the light, and I little knew how I should miss spreading my brown and yellow wings and flying here and there, hither and yon, just as I pleased. Little canaries born in captivity, which means born in a cage, know of no other life, and are happy and contented from the outset, but there have been times when I would have been glad and thank-

ful enough could I but have been free again. Yet there has been very much to make me truly thankful, as you will see.

I quite enjoyed "sailing the seas." On bright days we made a grand clatter on the old vessel; one high trill from my yellow throat would set half a hundred birds going until the captain and a sailor would rush into the narrow place, and clap cloths over the cages, which would stop our songs at once, as birds never sing in the dark.

After awhile I certainly expected to die of the cold. We poor little creatures would huddle close to each other, for the showy cage was only to catch us in and we were now in long cages, with eight or ten birds in each. Our songs grew fainter and fewer until no cloths were needed to hush our merry notes.

But one day, after what seemed a very long time to a canary, we went straining and jarring up to a wharf, and some men came where we were, and talked and talked and talked with the captain. Then two cages full of birds were carried to one store in a great city, and others went to other places. We were all sold right off from the vessel.

Oh, I can't describe how strange it all appeared to me at the bird store! So many interesting little objects were gathered there "for sale." There were birds from far-off Australia, from Brazil in South America, some with most brilliant feathers; there were parrots, mocking-birds, larks,—poor, timid little things frightened almost to death; then there

were curious creatures I had never seen before, not birds at all, but animals. Guinea-pigs with their white coats of smooth fur, and little shining eyes; monkeys running about in great homely cages, chattering in a most impolite way; squirrels leaping over twirling wheels in high cages; rabbits with pink eyes, and white fur ears lined with pink, and cute little white mice with pinkish ears and paws, scudding swiftly about, but alas! like all the rest, their fleet little toes bounded by the bars or wires of a cage.

People kept coming and going. Men would come in, look sharply about, buy a bird or an animal, and depart with a small cage under the arm. Then a clear-skinned, finely dressed lady would appear, go about, ask questions, and perhaps order something "to be sent." I soon came to understand that when anything was "to be sent" it was to go to some fine house, and I wished with all my heart that one of those fine ladies would buy me.

Yet I really enjoyed the bird store. It was fun to watch the monkeys race, chattering about, stopping now and then to cuff each other; then some of the birds disagreed, and, naughty as it was, I yet enjoyed seeing them fight and fly at each other. One morning I saw a young mocking-bird seize another by the back of the neck, hold it limp and helpless in its bill and shake it until its poor little claws clattered and crossed so drolly, that, could a canary have laughed, I certainly should have laughed outright. You would have thought that when at last the little mocker was

dropped it would have been stone dead ; no, up it hopped and went to fighting again harder than ever.

By and by I got tired of the bird store. The noise confused my little head ; it was none too warm there either, for the weather was called “ November,” and the ladies, to my wonder, began wearing soft furs like the coats of some animals. A great many people had looked at me during the three weeks I had been in the store, but no one seemed to wish to buy. I was learning more and more of the language each day, and all at once it popped into my little mind that if I wanted to be bought I must show that I could sing.

No sooner had I thought of this than I remembered how many times a man had stood before me whistling softly or knocking an end of his jack-knife against the edge of a cup, while I looked on in silent wonder. Now I understood that he hoped by the gentle whistle or clinking tinkle to make me sing. Then I thought again how I had never sung a note since reaching the bird store, and as soon as I began to think of singing I wanted to try.

Now, had I only been a little older and a little wiser, I should have known enough to have waited until some beautiful lady was noticing my fine little coat, and then poured forth one of my merry songs. But not being either old or wise, the next time the store was full of men, I suddenly “ took the floor.”

Of course I had heard some one say that, or I should never have known what it meant, but open went my tiny bill, and, once I began, it became hard

to stop. My little body fairly shook and trembled with the strength with which the melody rushed and poured in runs and trills, in loud echoing notes, and a perfect rapture of sound until, with a grand outburst of high staccato notes, long drawn and oft repeated, I reluctantly stopped.

Perhaps it had stimulated, which means urged, me on, that every man in the store gazed spellbound while I sang. As I ceased, the "bird man" looked triumphantly around, and said: "There! I told you so." Then they flocked about my cage. One said "five" something, another "seven." But the bird man only shook his head; "No, not a cent less than ten," he said.

Finally a man with a very smooth face and a long, curling moustache, with a pin with a white stone in it in his necktie, and a ring with another white stone in it on his finger, sung out: "All right! here goes an X for little Billy Trill." And he laid a crisp new bank-note on the counter. Only think, I had sold for ten dollars!

But, oh, dear me! While I was wondering about the elegant house to which I was longing and expecting to go, I found that the man who had bought and also named me was what was called "a barber," and I was to be taken to another shop.

## CHAPTER III.

### IN THE BARBER'S SHOP.

A NOTHER funny place. Rows of mugs behind glass cases made me think there must be no end of water to drink in this new store. The brushes sticking up in each mug taught me nothing. But you scarcely need be told that I soon found out what men came there for. Once in awhile a little girl slipped into a chair to have her hair cut, but no ladies ever visited the place.

“Now,” thought I, “here I shall have to stay all the rest of my life.” But I made up my mind to be a good little Billy, and do the very best I could. Let me whisper a word right here into the ears of boys and girls, because what I want to say is one of the things that I am very sure of, and we canaries can’t be sure of many things in this big, round world ; we are too little.

Listen, then : when any creature whatever, whether a morsel of a bird, a little boy or girl, or a great tall man, makes up his or her mind to do the best that can be done, there is no more to worry about, it is the very wisest plan that is, and it is almost always the sure way to success and to better things.

So, when I saw two or three, or half a dozen, men

lying back all ready to be shaved, I would open my mouth before the barbers had a chance to open theirs, and about every man present after being "groomed" would come and talk to me.

Pretty soon I began taking pleasure in pleasing others so well. The barber-in-chief, who owned me, had brought me to the shop in a mite of a wooden cage with thick close bars, just a little coop in which I had hardly more than room enough to turn around, but the next day he bought a cage which was much like the one in which I was first caught. The sight of it sent a pang into my tiny heart, for it carried me back to my beautiful home, and for a moment I drooped all over, because, when a memory came, it seemed as though it was bigger than I, the whole of me, and was more than I could bear.

But the barber called out kindly, "Here, cheer up, Billy! What's the matter with you? Ain't going to drop down at sight of this brave new house, I hope!" So much good a few kind, cheerful words can do! I perked right up, thought of that new resolve to do the best I could, and went skipping about the new cage as merry as you please.

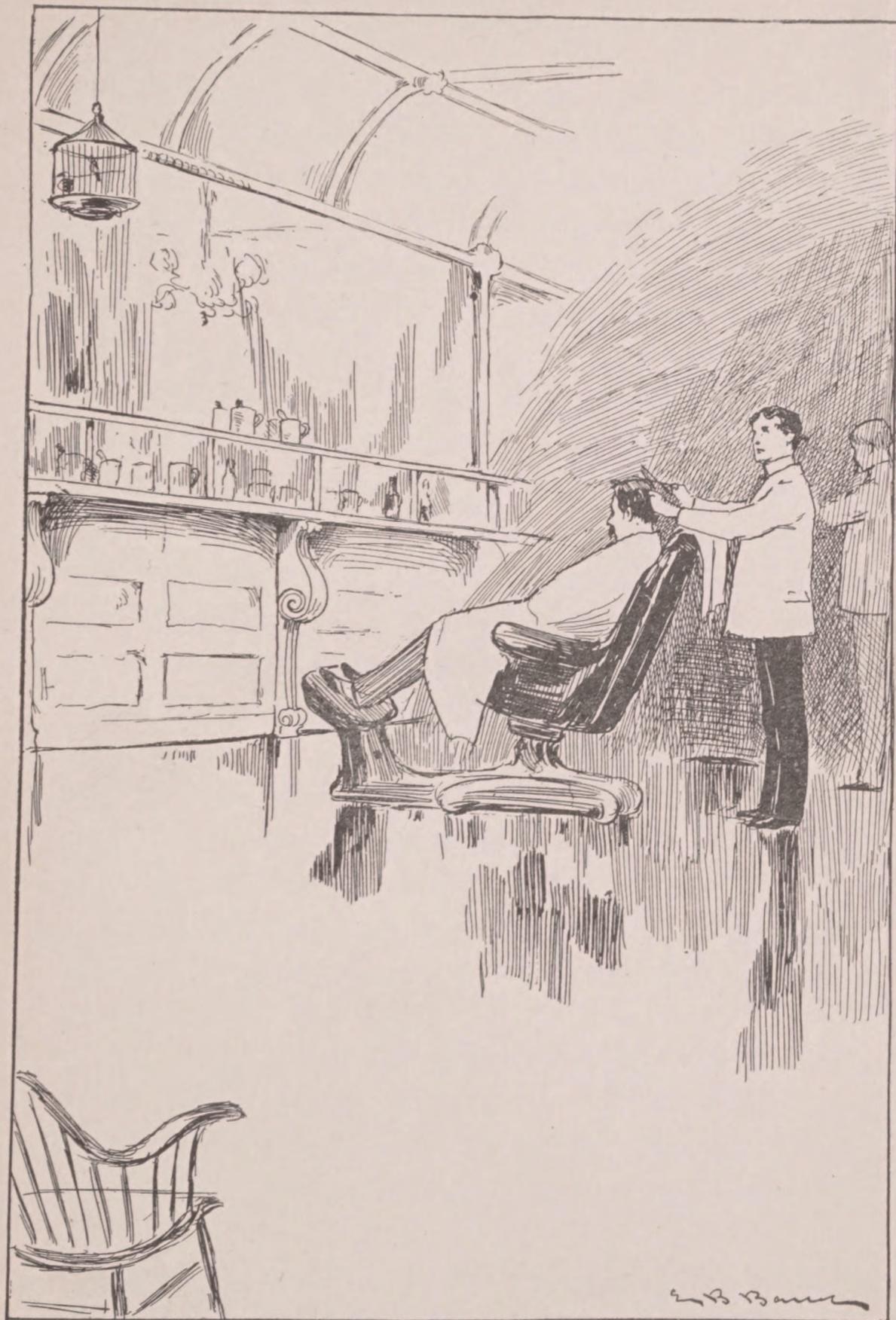
Then I soon began thinking I was not so badly off. I was kindly cared for. The shop was generally pretty warm. The seed in my cup was never allowed to run short. My bath-tub of white porcelain was filled with fresh water every day. Clean paper made a nice carpet for my feet, and my drinking cup was kept polished and well filled.

One of the barbers on coming from his lunch one day said, "Here, Billy, I've got something nice for you, saved it from my saucer for your little bill," and he stuck a lump of beautiful white sugar into a wire of my cage. Do you think it stayed there very long? Because if you do you're mistaken. I pecked and pecked, until down came what was left, to my little floor. But my master said I must not be given too much sugar, or it would make me sick.

Another day, a gentleman who had noticed me every time he visited the shop came in just after *his* lunch, and said: "I've brought something for Billy Trill he will soon nibble up, I'm thinking." He twisted a green and white leaf through the gilt bars and watched to see me try it.

Oh, dear me! dear me! Was ever there anything quite so good before? They called it "lettuce." Why, I never tasted anything else so good in all my little life, never! not even sugar. It was cool, crisp, and full of life, that is all the way I can tell about it. And it didn't hurt me a mite, not a mite.

After that I watched with all my little eyes whenever the gentleman came in, and once in awhile he would have a leaf of lettuce and sometimes he would not. One day I wanted one so, that, when he came in without it, I am ashamed to say I was so provoked that — what do you think? I plumped into the porcelain bath-tub and took a second ducking for the day, and — I found out something! It cooled me off wonderfully. And I think that if little girls or boys,



IN THE BARBER SHOP.



I scarcely dare say men, too, although I think it just the same, could only have a good ducking when they get angry and out of sorts, it would soon bring them to their senses, and do a sight of good.

I learned a good many things in that barber's shop. I don't know whether men talked there more than they do in other places, but they surely talked a great deal. It was fun Saturday nights. And it was fun on the night before what people call a "holiday." Then the shop would be full way up to almost midnight. Men would sit around waiting their turn to drop into one of the chairs, and be barbered. Meantime they talked.

I found out that what people call "money" was the chief thing in the world; that a man who had plenty of "money" was an entirely different person from one who hadn't much; it made men say "sir" to other men who had considerable of it; it was what brought happiness, contentment, and respect.

Remember, this was how it looked to a young bird. There is a great difference between a young bird and an old bird.

It did not escape my notice that my master had a great many chances to sell me. Very often men would say: "Come, now, what will you take for this songster?" But there was always one reply: "I don't want to sell Billy Trill."

One day a gentleman came in who wore a splendid coat with fine, soft fur on the collar and at the wrists. A beautiful ring was on one finger that at first looked

like a plain, gold band, then, as the light struck it, my sharp little eyes saw that it was filled in with precious stones that people call "diamonds." Everything this man wore looked costly, although there was no show, and now I know that real gentlemen do not wear showy clothes.

My master's clerks ran to wait on this man. One took his coat and hung it up, another his hat, they said "sir" every time they spoke to him, and, soon as possible, my master himself began serving him.

"Now, Billy," I said to myself, "why not do your prettiest? You may not want to stay in a barber's shop all your days. It is very lonesome here nights, and how much nicer it would be to live in a handsome house, where the street door wouldn't open every few moments and let in the cold air, and where, perhaps, a pretty lady would take care of you, and children love to hear you sing!"

Well, I did do my prettiest, or, rather, I sang it. All the time the gentleman was in the chair, I warbled and sang and trilled. I tried a song the mocking-bird used to sing in the bird store with so much sweetness that every one would keep quiet as soon as he began it, and, strange to say, I could sing like the mocker, come to try. And so I kept on until the gentleman arose from the chair. Then he came directly over to my cage.

Birds and animals can tell a great deal from the looks of people's eyes. And I knew from the look in the gentleman's eyes that he meant to buy me. It was

not done in a moment. My master wished to keep me, the gentleman had determined to own me. While they were talking I broke into what must have seemed rather a sad little song, because I feared lest after all the barber would refuse to let me go, and now I wanted to go very much to the gentleman's house. He spoke of "children" and "Christmas."

It was no longer November, but people called it "December," and the weather had grown very cold, oh, so cold, that when the outer door opened, and the air rushed in, I knew that if I had to stay outside for any length of time I should surely be frozen to death.

That sad little song did the work. The gentleman said something about its being a "dreadful price," but he laid down two of those crisp bank-notes, and I knew that I was sold again.

After that, my master scarcely looked at me while I stayed in the shop, and seemed to feel quite downcast, and the clerks watched me with eyes full of regret. But the next day a man came to the shop with a cage as white as snow, except that at the top was a gilt ball, and over the little places that held the seed and water cups were what looked like little gilt umbrellas.

Into this lovely new house I was invited to enter, and I hopped in with such an air that my master said, "Well done, sir." I felt grand and proud to think I had got so far up in the world as to be called "sir." Towards night, I was covered, cage and all, with a thick woollen rug, taken to a close carriage, and

whirled away. When I was uncovered, such a large, beautiful room as I was in!

What I found out that night was this: the name of the new people was "Goldcup." I was to be a Christmas present to Lizzie, the eldest little daughter. This was Christmas eve. The next morning I was to have a new mistress, Lizzie Goldcup. And I, Billy Trill, canary, was in one of the finest houses in the great city. What happiness!

## CHAPTER IV.

### AT THE GOLDCUPS'.

ONCE and for all I found out the next morning what takes place with people when Christmas comes. It is a great time for presents. The children, Lizzie, Susie, and Bertie, jabbered about what they had found in stockings that had been pinned up against the mantel the night I came.

A queer little man, called "Santa Claus," was all mixed up with the chimney, sleigh-bells, the stockings, and what was in them. Really, I could not understand; I was too small.

When the children came to the nursery, where hung my cage, they found beautiful presents waiting for them. Bertie, the little boy, had picture-books, a Noah's ark, and a smart rocking-horse. Susie had games, skates, and a sled. Lizzie, the eldest, had kid mittens, with soft fur cuffs, and a beautiful muff of dark, rich fur. She did not seem pleased or satisfied.

"Only two presents!" she exclaimed, "and both of you have three. 'Tisn't fair!" and out went her pretty lips in what people call a "pout."

Now I knew very well that this was my little mis-

tress, and I must say it made my bit of a heart rather anxious, when I saw that pout. But she hadn't spied me, and I thought the best thing I could do would be to break into a bright, cheery song. So I began.

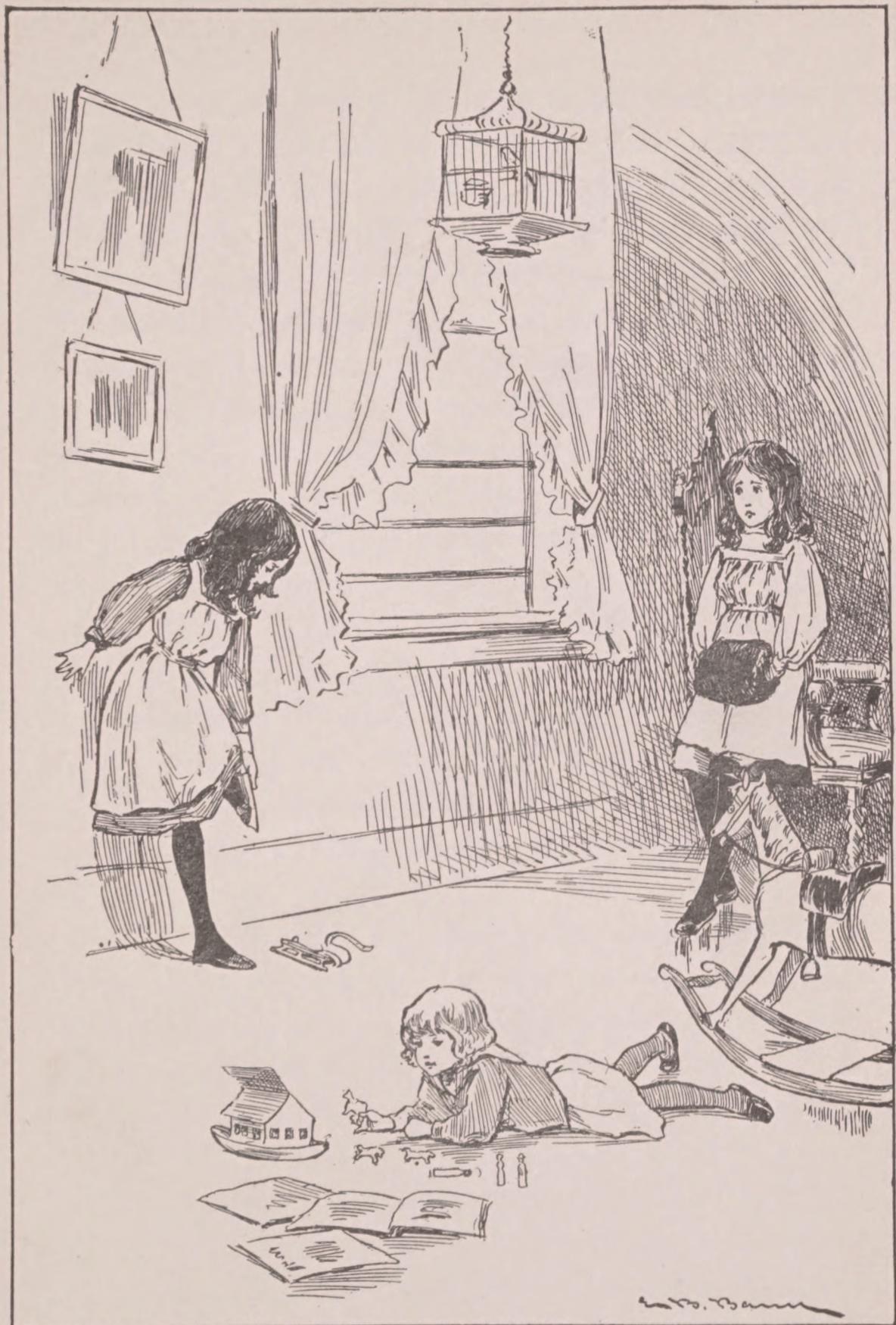
The children stood motionless from the moment of my first note, and as I felt that a good deal might depend on how well I pleased this new young mistress, you will readily believe that I trilled, and whistled, and carolled, until again my little body fairly fluttered with the effort and I was all tired out.

Lizzie was perfectly delighted. She flew about the room, clapping her hands, declaring I was the sweetest, the best, the most darling little canary that ever lived.

"It's mine! it's mine, I know it is!" she exclaimed, and in a few moments her mother came in, a very pretty, but tired-looking lady, whom Lizzie rushed up to, kissed, and thanked for her dear, darling little bird.

"That is a present from papa," Mrs. Goldcup said, and pretty soon in came the gentleman who had bought me. He looked finely in a short velvet house coat, pretty slippers of gray and white fur, cut very close, and a face all cleanly shaven. After Lizzie had jumped about and thanked him for her sweet birdie a good many times, he looked, I thought, a little sober, and this is what he said:

"You must remember, my dear child, that little Billy Trill is to be your especial charge, and will be dependent on you for care. You must be sure to feed the



“ONLY TWO PRESENTS!” SHE EXCLAIMED, “AND BOTH OF  
YOU HAVE THREE. ‘TISN’T FAIR!”



little fellow every day, see that he has fresh water to drink and for his bath, and that his cage is kept neat and clean. You are twelve years old, now, and must be my kind, thoughtful little daughter. Billy will repay your care, I know, with many sweet songs. To-morrow I will get him a cuttlefish bone, on which to sharpen his little bill. A hard-boiled egg, now and then, will answer for his turkey, and a leaf of lettuce, at any time, would delight his little heart. Now don't forget."

All this made me feel that I had come into a house where everything was going to be very fine for a canary. I felt convinced, from all my little eyes could see, and all my little senses take in, that here was plenty of money, and as that brought happiness, contentment, and respect, I was in the best of clover. Alas! before night I wished, with all my bit of a heart, that I was back in the barber's shop.

Soon after papa Goldcup went out of the room that bright Christmas morning, a woman with a tasty white cap on all trimmed with lace, and a clean white apron on, came to the nursery, and told the children that breakfast was ready. This was the nurse.

But, oh, dear! just back of her trailed a handsome little Scotch terrier, his blue-gray crimpy hair parted down the middle of his back, and his eyes half covered with crinkly hair. At sight of me he acted as though he had suddenly gone crazy. He barked furiously,

made leaps in the air, and said, as plainly as a dog could say anything: "Let me just get hold of you, Mr. Canary, and see how I'd eat you, crown, claws, tail, and all!"

I trembled like a leaf at the little dog's frenzy, but I trembled far more at what followed. In the most unladylike way, Lizzie flew into a great passion. She screamed at Tibby, the terrier, called him "a good-for-nothing little wretch," and, opening the door, told him to "clear out." And as the hairy little fellow scrambled through the doorway, she gave him a sharp kick that sent him yelping into the hall, and I could hear his painful little "yip, yip," all the way down the stairs.

Nurse said, "For shame, Miss Lizzie, you ought to know better than to treat poor Tib so cruelly. You've taught him to bark at strangers, and the poor doggy didn't know Billy, and thought he was doing right to bark at him." But Lizzie turned on Nurse, and told her to "stop preaching." She did look a little ashamed, but you can imagine how this all seemed to me; I was not too young, nor too ignorant, to ask myself how I was likely to fare at the hands of a young girl who would treat a loving, obedient little dog as Lizzie had treated Tibby.

I remembered how, one night, a boy had come into the barber's shop having with him a lively fox terrier, his trimmed ears erect, his short tail wagging with eagerness. I was just finishing a song as he entered. Like Tibby, he acted as though it would be joy un-

told to eat me whole. He spun around as if trying to catch his own loud bark.

But his young master called out, "Be quiet, Foxy, come here!" then, as the well-trained dog went nosing up to the boy, his stumpy tail still wagging fiercely, his master stooped down, soothed him by passing a gentle hand up and down his sleek, spotted back, and said, "Don't you know, Foxy, that some other little objects have just as good a right to be heard from in this wide, round world as your ridiculous little lordship? If you bark like that when I take you out for a walk, you will soon be invited to stay at home. Now, go charge like a gentleman, and don't let me hear another growl."

The pretty Foxy, without having his feelings hurt in the least, had been shown it was a mistake to bark at a singing bird, and sat so quietly on his plump haunches watching me twitter about that I thought I would sing him a little song, and when I looked around to see how he liked it, what do you think! he had run his pointed nose between his forepaws on the floor and was fast asleep! I saw him often afterwards, but he never barked at me again.

All this rushed through my mind almost before I had heard Tibby's last faint yip, and I knew he had gone to the dining-room, perhaps hoping for a comforting word from his master.

For a few days my care was all that could have been asked. Lizzie put clean paper in the bottom of the white cage every day, which was not necessary, and

had I eaten all the different things put into my pretty house, I should certainly have fallen very ill. But I knew too much for that.

One morning the nurse talked to Lizzie seriously about tucking so many things into my cage. "Don't you know," she said, "it would be enough to kill a canary to cram so much all at once? It would be much better and more sensible not to begin so fierce, but to make up your mind to keep up steady care; there's danger that all this attention will soon run out."

Alas! that was exactly what I feared. But I tried to find comfort in thinking that, if Lizzie forgot me, Nurse might be more thoughtful, and save me from starving.

On Christmas morning the children had been much taken up with their games, books, candy, and toys. All the morning they chattered and played, and although once or twice I was afraid they were not going to agree, yet there were so many new things to amuse them that they got along very well.

In the afternoon they went out to play, and I was glad to be alone awhile in the warm, quiet nursery. All at once Mrs. Goldcup came in, and the next moment I heard the patter of Tibby's little feet. He flew into the same rage as before, and Mrs. Goldcup, instead of quieting him, and showing I was not to be barked at and frightened, said, in an impatient tone, "Oh, you tiresome creature!" and, opening the door, she ordered him out, and shut him into the hall.

She looked about a moment or two, went to the

window, and gazed into the street a little while, but she said never a word to the little stranger in the cage, and she surely did not look happy. Why should that be? Here was a beautiful house, fine furniture, soft carpets, people to do the work, pets to please and cheer her, and, yes, there must be plenty of the magic thing called "money."

Ah, could it be that I had made a mistake in my little bird mind? Was not money indeed the chief thing in the world? Did it not always bring happiness and content?

The next day was stormy, and the three children were obliged to remain in the house all day. Such an unhappy, unhappy day as it was! No peace or anything like it. At last Susie brushed by the spot where Bertie had stood up the animals in his Noah's ark, and her skirts tumbled them all down. The boy flew at her, striking out right and left, and Susie, in trying to push him off, fell up against Lizzie, who was reading a book.

Well, I can't describe the scene at all; I don't know how; only there was such a noise, such a screaming, crying, and scolding, that Mrs. Goldcup came running up to see what was the matter. Nurse tried to explain, but could not make herself heard, and when it grew a little quieter, Mrs. Goldcup told the nurse that if she couldn't manage the children better, she should have to find some one who could.

Poor Nurse! She needed the money earned looking after the noisy children, and she fell to crying at the

unjust blame she had received. But Bertie had a kind little heart, for all his quick temper, and he climbed into Nursey's lap, begging her not to cry, and promising to be a better boy. Nurse told him a nice little story, and the room grew quieter.



“THE BOY FLEW AT HER, STRIKING OUT RIGHT  
AND LEFT.”

But the children did quarrel dreadfully. With everything about them to enjoy, they really enjoyed but very little. Nurse said the trouble was, they had altogether too much. I know now she told the truth. Poor Nursey! She had a hard time of it, and with all my heart I pitied her.

## CHAPTER V.

### A STRAY BIRD.

JUST now I was pitying Nurse. It was not long before I pitied myself. If it went to my heart when Nurse advised Lizzie not to be so fierce in her attentions at first, but to be sure and keep them up, it went still more sharply to my poor little stomach when she began neglecting me.

At first, she fell off about the paper which was my carpet. Instead of having a fresh one every morning, I was glad to get one at the end of a week or ten days. In this time, she would not even shake it out, but would only give me seed and water.

Now, no one who does not stop to think can imagine how very trying this is for a poor bird. We have acute little senses, small as they are, and the odour of seed-pods, old water, and broken bits of cuttlefish bone is not very pleasant for one thing, and then for another, where seed, sand, and other bits are allowed to stay too long in a cage, our little claws get all balled up, which is far from comfortable.

But all this, I can assure you, seemed like nothing, beside the dreadful suffering of great hunger. For yes, the days came when, from morning to night,

Lizzie would go flying about, thinking nothing of the brown and yellow mite, who could not sing a note for very starvation. And as it was Lizzie's work to look out for me, no one else seemed to give poor Billy a thought.

Perhaps, after not having had either seed or water for two whole days, she would all at once say, "Oh, dear me, I almost forgot you, Billy!" And I would think that, could I only speak in the language of people, I would cry out, indignantly, "*Almost!*"

If you can believe it, I went twice for three days without a morsel either to eat or to drink, and then it was Nursey who remembered me, and fed me. Had I known of some great king or queen upon whom I could have called to have pity, how with all my feeble strength I would have called! And then, to make it all the more hard, when at last she did remember me in time to save my life, Lizzie would say, "Oh, Billy, what a little bother you are!" I wished with all my little might and main I could fly away, and stop bothering her.

Tibby never learned to like me. How could he? No one ever taught him the least show of manners towards a little creature smaller than himself. Two or three times when Nurse and the children were away, he scared me nearly out of my senses, barking, flying around, and making the most fearful rumpus. What happened one day I shall never forget, never! not if I live to be gray with age.

Every one was out of the house except Tibby and

myself. I heard, through the half-open door, his quick jumps over the stairs. The next moment, he was in the room. He must have made up his little doggy mind that this was the day when I had better be made way with, once for all. How he did bark! He worked himself into a perfect rage and roar, and his eyes looked as though sparks of fire came out of them.

A tall chair, with a sharp, pointed back and stuffed arms, stood near the window. Up he sprang to the arm of the chair, and from that to the window-sill. Then he made a mighty spring, and almost caught a paw in the lower part of the cage; but he missed it, and fell heavily, right on the pointed carving at the back of the chair. He struck with so much force I wondered if a bone snapped, but all my fright turned to pity at the difference in the noise Tib made after he struck that chair. He fairly howled with pain, and I wished, as hard as I could wish, that some one would come and take care of him.

The poor fellow had grown weak with crying and pain when Nurse came running over the stairs. As she picked Tibby up, one slender leg hung limp and useless. "Oh, yes," Nurse said, "I see. You made a great jump in hopes to catch poor Billy Trill, and you must have banged against the chair and broken your leg."

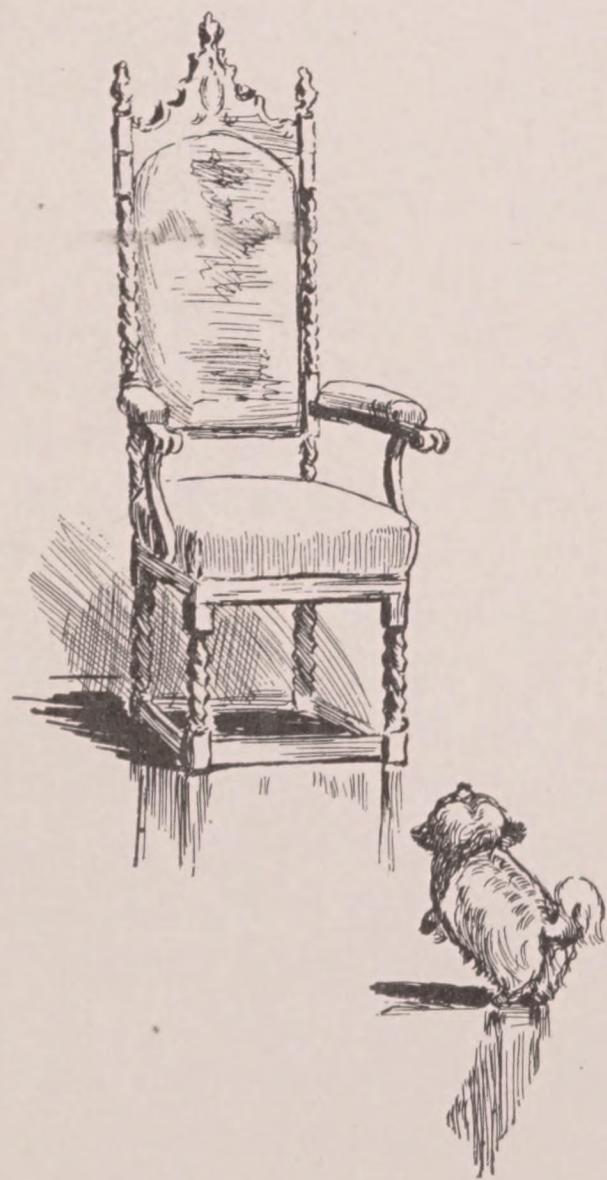
The next time I saw Tibby he was going on three legs, and very slowly at that. The fourth little limb was a mass of bandages. If he chanced to hit it

against anything, he would yelp piteously. Much as I pitied him, he seemed only to hate me the more since the accident. Once I heard some one say that people usually disliked any one whom they had injured. Poor Tibby had only tried to injure me, but he still hated me, and never turned his wicked little eyes towards my cage without growling.

Another day, I began to discover something. Nurse and the children were down-stairs, when Mr. Goldcup came into the nursery to look at a window that needed fixing in some way. Then Mrs. Goldcup came in, and asked, in a complaining tone, “Can’t you make inquiries among some of your friends, and see if you can’t hear of a good nurse for the children? I’m all tired out hearing Nurse say she can’t control Lizzie and Susie.”

“No, I do not think that is a duty that belongs to me,” Mr. Goldcup said; “ladies find nurses, not men. And I can’t help saying, I do not think Nurse is to blame at all for the way that our little girls behave. I do not think they should be allowed to act as they do. No nurse could manage children who are not properly trained.”

I think I felt what “respect” meant for the first time, as Mr. Goldcup spoke, and I respected him for speaking so plainly, and with so much justice. But why, pray, did not he, who was so fine a gentleman, train his children himself? Ah, his next remark showed why. It did not show him to have much courage, I thought, yet — men love peace.



“ HOW HE DID BARK ! ”



“There is so much trouble,” he said, “if ever I try to straighten things out for poor Nurse, that I have given up trying in despair; so when she goes away,—as she means to, next week, for she told me so,—you will have to do what you can to get some one in her place. I only hope you will find another as good a woman.”

Then Mrs. Goldcup began to cry, and said no one else in the world had so hard a life as hers. No pity from any one, especially from her husband, who ought to be always ready to help her. Everything, she said, went wrong. The world was a hard place to live in, and there was very little happiness in it, very little indeed!

And, yet, here was plenty of money, that I had thought bought every possible good. But surely Mrs. Goldcup was neither happy nor contented, and even I, a little canary, could feel but small respect for a parent who allowed children to behave so badly that a willing, faithful nurse would not stay with them.

I soon found that Mrs. Goldcup had not really wanted Nurse to go away. She called her to the nursery, after the children had gone to bed, said she was a good girl, and tried to make her believe that it would be a great mistake to leave so fine a situation. Then she offered her considerable more money to remain.

But Nurse said, slowly and soberly, “No, money—is—not—everything,” and nothing that Mrs. Goldcup could say made her change her mind.

Now this was very bad for me. The winter was slipping away, but it was very, very cold outside. I knew it by the way the wheels crunched along over the hard ground. Not a green leaf was to be seen outside of the windows, and Susie still took her skates and went to the frozen pond. And if Nurse went away what would become of me? I should not have been alive then, had it not been that she had filled my little cups several times. Lizzie was so heedless, so selfish, so little fond of any one but herself, that it made me heartsick to think of having Nurse go, for although some one else would probably come, yet she might never think of the hungry little object in the white cage.

Well, Nurse went the next week, as she had said, but it was not at all easy finding the right one to take her place. Miss Lizzie and Miss Susie had to look out for themselves. Bertie was always the best of the three. And now came the very hardest days I have ever seen in all my little life. The morning before Nursey went away, she put clean paper in my cage, washed my cups and the little bath-tub, filled both seed and water cups full, and scattered seed on the floor of the cage. I knew what that meant.

I made both seed and water last as long as I could. Then, after two days spent without food or drink, Mr. Goldcup, who was by far the kindest one of all the family, saw my condition and fed me. He also talked to Lizzie about the cruelty of forgetfulness where a living creature was concerned. She fed me

a few times after that; then it was so hard, so very hard for me, that I made up my little mind I could not live long, but still I was determined to do the best I could, and when I was hungriest, I would sing and sing, in hopes the longing song would remind Lizzie of her duty. Alas! it did not.

I was growing nearly discouraged, when, one mild, sunshiny day, Mrs. Goldcup came into the nursery, and opened a window at the top to air the room. As she went out again, I noticed that the door of my cage was pushed slightly aside. Could I open it wide enough to squeeze my little body through? A wild desire to escape from the cage, from the house, seized me. My heart went pit-a-pat, fairly knocking against my tender sides at the thought. The air swept in at the window, full of wintry chill. Would I freeze in a few moments? Would I find food? Oh, food, food! I was nearly crazy for it!

At that, down I hopped. With my strong little bill I did push back the cage door far enough to get out, and, without stopping to think any longer, out I flew into the open air. It was not so dreadfully cold. Perhaps I could find the barber's again. But, oh, dear! Once I was actually away from the house I could not possibly have found my way there again. Well, I didn't want to, and whatever came I was going to be brave.

What I wanted to see was an open window. It darted through my mind that I could sing, that I was called a beautiful singer, and that I must be a val-

able bird. And almost any place would be better than the Goldcups', where food was the scarcest thing I knew of. And, oh, joy! There *was* an open window, and in such a big, big house!

In I flew, and all I could think of was how beautiful it felt to be where it was warm again. The wind had chilled me through and through, although I had not flown far. But where was I? No signs of food were to be seen. I was in the largest room I had ever dreamed of, and as a great door stood open at one end, I knew there must be other rooms.

I flew out to a large hall, then down some stairs. In a queer, plain room was a common wooden table, and on it were crumbs. Lots of crumbs! How I did eat! Nothing I had ever tasted before, neither seed, sugar, boiled egg, nor even my favourite lettuce, ever seemed half as delightful as those simple crumbs. Sometime there must have been a supper there, for the crumbs were still sweet, although rather hard, but, oh, they were *so* welcome!

When I had stuffed myself until I think I must have swelled, and I really ached with food, I flew back to the great room. It was filling with people. I hid in a groove high up in a wooden arch and — what do you think! After the long seats were filled with people, I heard wonderful music from a great object that was all pipes as far as I could see. But stranger still, a man got up on a high, raised place at one end of the great room, and told about a great

Being who made the world, made men, and everything, and yet *cared for the birds!*

That must have been why I hadn't starved. It isn't a king or a queen I needed to call on when I was so hungry, it was this kind Being. Two things I have never forgotten since that time: one, that there is a great, kind, wonderful Being, who cares for birds; another, that the hardest days I ever saw were in the house of a rich man, and in a beautiful cage of white and gold.

## CHAPTER VI.

### AT SUNFLECK COTTAGE.

AFTER the people went out of the great room, a man went about closing up everything. He made it so gloomy I felt like drooping with loneliness. Then when he went out, I flew down again to the queer, plain room. Only crumbs enough remained for my dinner and supper.

I passed a lonely afternoon. In the evening some people came to a large room down-stairs, and talked and sang, but I was tired out, and fell asleep on a soft cushion in one of the long seats.

The next morning the crumbs were all gone; no one came to the great building, except a man who entered one of the lower doors, which he left open after him. I could not stay in so lonely a place, and where all signs of food had vanished. So fluffing out my feathers to make them thick and warm as possible, away I flew again,—a poor, homeless little canary. But let me whisper,—I wasn't frightened a bit, not one bit!

I perched for a few moments on a tall tree, to look around, but boo! how the wind went through my

little yellow sides! It seemed to me my little bones must have turned blue. It wouldn't do to stay perched, that was certain. So off I started, and although the wind cut me as I sped, yet the unusual exertion of flying gave a slight glow to my sensitive body.

On, on I went, but not an open window did I see, and I was going over broad, busy streets, where the buildings were high and grand, and did not look as though people lived in them, but merely used them to carry on business in. So I turned into some side streets, and pretty soon I came to a low, stumpy little house, set in the middle of a tiny garden. The house was very small, but at once gave me a thought of home. It was what people call "homelike." And there was a window open two or three inches at the top.

Thankful for almost any shelter, in I flew, and perched on the upper edge of a hanging bookcase. The room was very quiet. In a great armchair sat an old woman with a funny cap on. It had a wide ruffle all around it, and I thought it made her sweet old face look all the sweeter. She was fast asleep. Very soon a door opened, and in limped a little girl



A HOMELESS BIRD.

not more than ten years old. Her hair hung in two braids down her back, and was almost as yellow as my coat. She was very lame, but such a good face as she had ! She shut the window softly. How cosey it all was !

Then the old woman opened her eyes, and a soft voice said: "Aweel, my goot Gretchie, you've got t'place all cleared up while grandam slep', haven't you ? Vot a spry little vooman you are !"

The child hopped about with a queer limp and spring, so used had she got to her lameness. "Yes, grandam," she replied, "we're all in order now, and I'm ready to work with you awhile." But—I was hungry again.

"Now," I thought, "I ought to let them know I am here, then I know they will give me something to eat." And so I began, softly at first, but singing gradually higher, and with many musical trills, in hopes to please the simple people I already liked so much, and with whom I wanted to stay.

In thinking it over now, I almost know any one would have laughed at the scene in the humble home, as my song rolled forth. The old grandmother's eyes grew large, and her mouth opened in surprise as she looked up, and up to the top of the bookcase. "Gretchie" stood stock-still in the middle of the room, her hands clasped tightly before her, like those of a child I once saw in a picture, and that some one said was praying.

When I stopped no one spoke for a moment, then



AT SUNFLECK COTTAGE.



the old grandma said, "Ah! t'goot Got sent t'little birdie to cheer us, He did so!"

"Oh, grandam!" said Gretchie, "it's a canary, a dear little canary, but I'm afraid it's a little runaway, too. Perhaps it won't be right to keep the little darling," and she looked very sober at the thought.

"Aweel, aweel," answered the grandma, as if that idea was unwelcome, "go now, and get t'dicky-bird's cage, and when Fritz come, we'll tell him about t'birdie's coming, and see what he say. But get t'cage, t'poor starling might be hungry and t'irsty."

Off went Gretchie with her hop and limp, and she soon returned. "I never expected to have another bird, when Dicky died," she said, in a voice that trembled, "but if we can only keep this little dear, how happy I shall be!"

She disappeared with the cage, and was gone what seemed to me a long time; then back she came with the cage neatly cleaned, brown paper on its floor, the plain little water-cup full, and the seed-cup filled with soft, delicious crumbs. A little sauce-dish held water for my bath.

"Come, sweetie-tweet," she chirped, "we haven't a bit of bird-seed for you to-day, but to-morrow you shall have some, and if you'll only stay with us, such care as you shall have." Then she stood off a little, and watched me.

In an instant I was inside the cage, pecking eagerly

at the welcome food. "Look t'are, now," said the grandma, "t' little honey-pot was almost starve. Oh, t'poor mite of a starling, t'are no knowing how far t'little wings have fly. I hope t'little t'ing won't fill his little pipes so full he burst."

Perhaps there was danger of it. So I took a long, sweet drink, and then, *plump* went my body into the clear, shining water of the bath.

Such a lovely home as I had found! And yet there were no riches there. Far from that. Gretchie did most of the work, her grandma sometimes directing her, and Fritzy helping, what little he had time for. The grandma was old and infirm, and seldom left her deep armchair, except to go at night to her bedroom, close by. She knitted all day long on coarse woollen mufflers and mittens sent her from the great store where Fritzy worked. Any spare time that she had Gretchie also spent in knitting.

When the darkness began creeping on, at close of the day, Fritzy came home,—only a boy! A bright-haired, rosy-cheeked lad of fifteen years. How happy and cheerful they were! My story was told over and over, but Fritzy looked grave as he said, "Oh, yes, I must tell about the birdie, and see can we hear of an owner."

But, to my great joy, after a peaceful week had rolled by, Fritzy said he could hear of no one who had lost a canary, and Gretchie said, gleefully, that I belonged at Sunfleck Cottage.

Days of sweet content followed. I learned by

heart the useful lesson, that money is not the chief thing in the world, and it is not great luxury that makes the home. Rosy-cheeked Fritz worked hard from early morning until evening. Gretchie never was idle, and never for a day was I forgotten, or my cage allowed to go uncleaned.

People who knew and loved my simple friends came often to see them, and seldom without bringing something nice for the old granddame—she was an old German dame, well known and respected by many friends.

I was treated to the best they had. Bits of date, the inside of a rich fig, a grape pulp, or even a peppermint, gladdened my atom of a palate very often. What was all the grandeur of the Goldcup house, where I nearly starved, to the cosey quiet, the constant treats, the care, and the calm content of this humble home?

When the sun shone into the bright sitting-room, it came through the boughs of a tall tree outside, and fell in spots or flecks along the floor; from this they named the little home “Sunfleck Cottage.” I sang to these kind friends my choicest songs. I think my voice sweetened with the dainties to which I was almost daily treated. I had lost my name of Billy Trill in coming to them, but what of that? I had gained love and a home. By and by I will tell you how I got my name back again.

I could have stayed at the cottage for ever, would have been glad to then, but this was not to be. My

fine voice was to lure me to a different home. Could a canary have shed tears, I should have ruined my little eyes with weeping, when, after three lovely months, I was rudely borne away from dear, peaceful Sunfleck Cottage.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A STOLEN CANARY.

THE winter passed, and spring came. Spring, with its buds and blossoms, its leayes and flowers. On pleasant days, my little mistress would hang my cage on a hook outside of the house. This was a great delight, as the outer air, now that the sting of cold had gone, was like fresh life to me, and then it was great pleasure to see people passing, and to hear the songs of other birds. I was out of the reach of dogs and pussies, and in the gladness of my little heart such a thing as fear never entered it. And so good and pure was my little mistress, that thoughts of harm or danger for me I know never occurred to her.

But one warm, sunshiny day, Gretchie, after placing my cage outside, started out on an errand, going slowly along, as she always did in the street. She turned, waved her dear little hand to me, and soon was out of sight. Alas! I was to see her no more for many days.

I peeped in at the window, and saw the old grand-dame asleep over her soft wools. She always had that morning nap. Then I broke into a merry song.

Suddenly something startled me. Two boys, poorly dressed, and with unclean faces, were creeping towards me from a thick shrub. Had I been less frightened and had my wits about me, I might have broken into an angry twittering, and perhaps have scared them



BILLY IS STOLEN.

away. But their movements were so sly and spry that, before I had time to think of anything, one had mounted to the shoulders of another, and caught down my cage.

Then back to the shrubbery they rushed, and one boy opened my cage and cautiously caught me in his

hand. I was clapped into a little wooden cage, like the one I had been put into when the barber bought me, my plain but roomy cage was left in the shrubbery, and the guilty young thieves started away with me in their hands.

The boldness of them! They made no attempt to hide me as they tramped along. Then a strange thing happened. I all at once saw my old master, the barber, approaching. Oh, would not he know me, and rescue me? No; yet as he passed he gave me a sharp look and said, "Ha! you look like Billy Trill!" One of the boys laughed coarsely and said, "No; I guess not!" But as the barber went on he turned to his comrade and remarked, "That isn't a bad name for a bird, is it?"

Then they tramped on and on. I wondered what dreadful place they would take me to, and if I shouldn't soon starve again. I was still quite a young bird, you see.

The boys soon entered an electric car, rode a long distance, then got out in what looked like another city. I was relieved when they turned into a wide, quiet, beautiful street. Pretty soon they stopped before an elegant house, handsomer even than the Goldcups'. They talked together a moment, then went up the marble steps. As the bell rang, a coloured man opened the door, but soon closed it again, saying if they had anything to sell they must go to the basement.

But just then a fine carriage stopped before the

house, and a lady, prettily yet simply dressed, got out. The moment I looked into her eyes, I loved her, and wished that she would buy me. She had kind eyes, full of gentleness and goodness.

I have always felt sorry for those boys, but I think perhaps they did not have good parents to teach them what was right. They told a wrong story, all about being so poor they must sell a pet canary. But they spoke softly, and looked sad. I think the lady believed them.

“What is his name?” she asked. “Billy Trill,” at once answered the boy who held me.

“I know it would please poor little Davy, especially if he is such a singer as you say,” the lady murmured, looking very sober.

I do not know how much she paid for me, but the boys looked greatly delighted, and she took me in her gentle hands, and carried me herself into the grand house, over a wide staircase, and into a large, sunny, elegantly furnished sitting-room on the second floor.

“See here,” she said, in a most cheerful voice, holding up the mean little cage as she spoke.

A pale little fellow, with yellow hair, the bluest of eyes, and, I am sorry to say, not a very happy countenance, looked up as she spoke.

“Ho!” he said, “Another canary. It’ll be just like Trippit, that never sings a note. But it’s a pretty little cove,” he added, at sight of my mixed coat. “He looks as if he must be some relation to Mammy Moll.”

The next moment I thought I should have died of fright. The boy was seated in a tufted chair so wide and deep it looked almost like a bed. He straightened himself to take me, and there beside him was an enormous cat. And, now that it is easy to speak of her calmly, I must confess she was the very handsomest creature I had ever seen in all the animal kingdom. She was yellow, black, and white. Where her coat was yellow it was bright and clear as gold ; where white, it was pure and clean as new snow ; where black, it was deep and shining.

They called her a “tortoise-shell cat,” and this because her glossy colours were like those of a tortoise, a kind of turtle from whose case of shell are made exquisite combs, the handles of fans, and many other things. The colours are different shades of yellow, brown, and black.

Puss looked at me with gentle eyes, and with no signs of wanting to devour me, like Tibby Goldcup. Yet a cat is to a bird what a tiger would be to a little boy, and I flew wildly to the side of my cage, and peeped loudly at finding myself so close to one.

“Oh, ho !” said Davy. “I wish this silly little bird could know that Mammy Moll wouldn’t touch him, not even if he were hopping about on the floor.”

But even at these comforting words I was thankful when the kind lady said, “Well, we won’t let the poor little thing suffer from fear, and — what do you think his name is ?”

Davy's face broke into a smile at the sound of "Billy Trill." "I like it," he said.

I heard the promise of a fine new cage, and was given canary bird seed, water, and — oh, delight! — a leaf of lettuce. "See him gobble the lettuce, mamma," Davy said, with another smile, and his white little face was beautiful, when it lighted up so.

"Now, Billy," I said to myself, "some Being has brought you into another lovely home, and you must show how thankful you are by singing one of your best songs." So, after clearing my throat with a drink of water, I began. At first my song was gentle and low, just a soft little tune; then it ran higher, clearer, broke into trills and ecstatic runs, — a kind of wild, unmeasured carol. Davy's great blue eyes never left me a moment, and intoxicated, I think, with my own melody and the boy's attention, I went on and on, until, breaking into a gay, trilling roundelay, I twisted and twisted with the strong fervour of my song.

What was my surprise, as I finished with a loud swelling of triumphant "cheep, cheep, cheep, cheeps!" to see Davy throw back his little golden head, and burst into a perfect passion of tears. His mother could not keep the tears out of her own eyes, as she tried to calm and quiet him.

"Oh, mamma, mamma!" he sobbed, "I shall love him better than Mammy Moll, or Trippit, or Daddy Rex. Let me hold him, please; you may take Mammy Moll away if you will."

He soon grew calm as his mother stirred up the great cat, and gently pushed her to the floor. Then as she put the cage in his hands, she said, "Now, Davy, I'm going down-stairs awhile, and as Nurse is dusting the library, why don't you amuse pretty Billy by pretending to tell him your story, and something about your home? It would be great sport, I think."

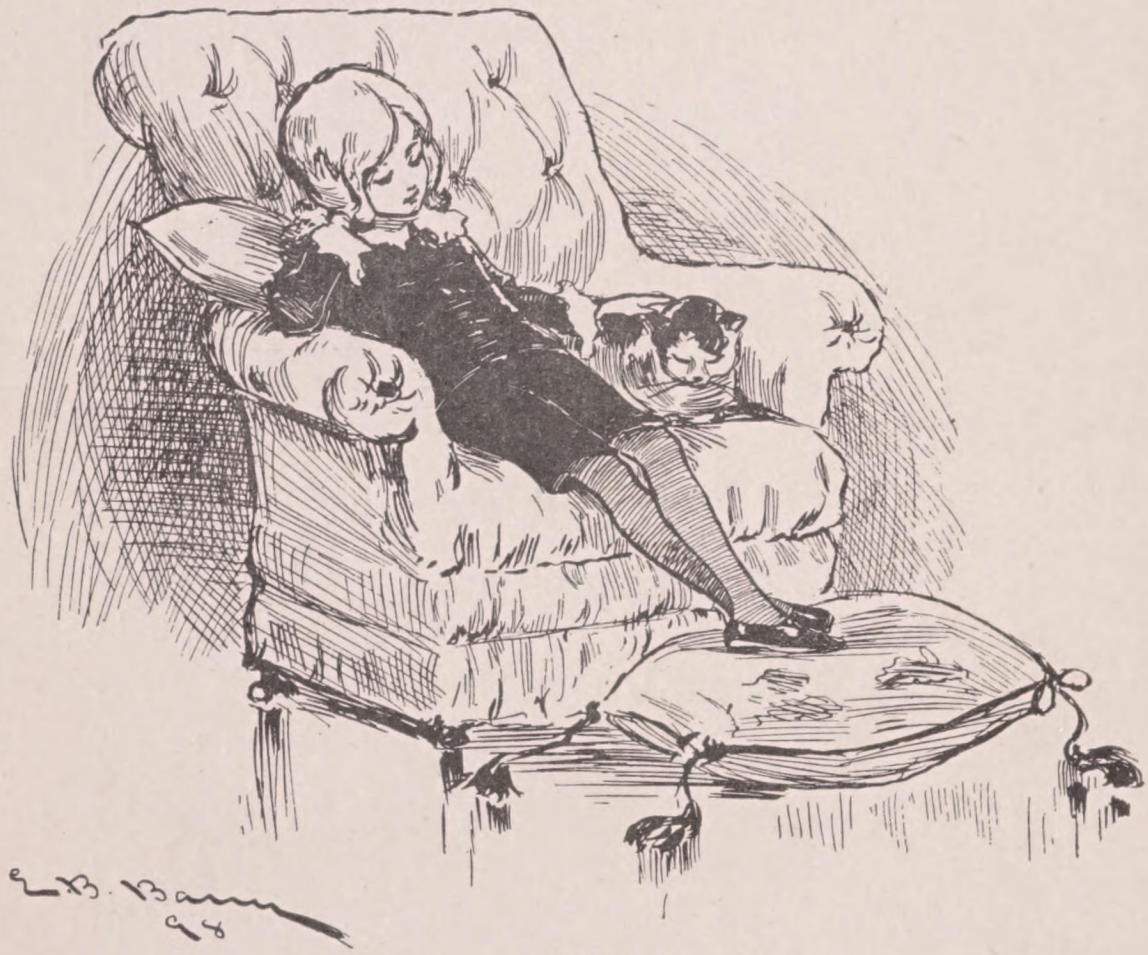
Mammy Moll had gone over by the fireplace, and looked mild and sleepy, yet I was immensely relieved when she got up and followed Davy's mother from the room. I eyed my little master in silent hopes to hear the story his mother had proposed. How little he imagined I could catch and understand every word as he began :

"So you're little Billy Trill, are you? Well, I'm just goin' to love you awfully, name and all. I think Billy Trill's just right for you, and you sha'n't be anybody else's little bird, never! My name's Davy Graham. I can't run about like most peeps o' my age, 'cause once, when I was a baby boy, my nurse let me fall out my baby carriage, and my back ain't been right ever since. But doctor says one these days I'm goin' to walk well's anybody, if I just keep patient and don't try to step for 'bout a year more.

"I'm seven years old, and sometimes I'm good and patient, and sometimes I ain't. Papa says I'm all his little sons and daughters, so I ought to behave well as ten children would."

Davy stopped to giggle at this, and I felt like laughing, too, at such a funny idea. Then he went on :

“They do lots to please me, papa and mamma do, and Nursey Jess is nice, too, only she won’t give me things sometimes that I’m bound to have. I don’t try making papa or mamma give me things now, after they’ve once said ‘no.’ ‘Tisn’t any use. Papa says



DAVY.

he loves me too well to spoil me, even if I am his poor little Davy, with a weak back. And mamma, she always ups and does just as papa does. They’re a jolly papa and mamma, though I sometimes wish I could manage them a little more. I can’t; they’re bound to manage me, so I have to let ‘em.

“Papa’s a lawyer, and I guess he’s got some money, but he says money is to spend, and to enjoy, and to do good with, and not to think too much of. But he says he wants me to get strong and well, so he can make a little ‘legal man’ of me one of these days. Nursey says that means a little lawyer.

“Down-stairs, we’ve got Daddy Rex, a great rolling St. Bernard,—a big, big dog. But he never hurts anybody, or anything that belongs to the house. He’s older’n I am, ever so many years.

“Mammy Moll has had five hundred kittens,—” Davy giggled again, and I think I must have looked pleased,—“she never fights the least grain, unless some one pesters her little cats; then she claws, and spits, and hunches up her back like a hoop. I don’t know what becomes of her kits; Jess says some of them ‘don’t live.’ I bet Thomas, our butler, knows what they die of,—Jess says she doesn’t.

“But I forgot. Papa says I mustn’t say ‘I bet,’ ‘tisn’t gent’manly. In the dining-room is Trippit, our other canary. She is all yellow as gold, but doesn’t sing. She only chirps. We like her, though, ’cause we’ve had her five years.

“Now, that’s ‘bout all I know. Norah, the cook, weighs ‘bout a ton, I guess. She shakes the house when she walks. Once in awhile I go out to ride,—oh, and I’ll tell you what! When I go to get your cage, Billy, I’ll take you with me!”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HOME, SWEET HOME.

SO I had the family history as far as I cared to know it. And highly delighted I was, I can assure you, to find into what a lovely home I had come to stay. Yes, here my wanderings were to cease, and I was to become one of the most beautiful of families.

You will easily believe that I longed to go down-stairs, and make the acquaintance of Trippit, the other canary. But this was not to be just yet. When I saw Mr. Graham I liked him, oh, very much! I suppose he is my master-in-chief, although I am always spoken of as "Davy's Billy."

It was quite funny, and they all laughed about my new cage, for I never got it for three months. This was how it happened: Davy's mamma had promised him that when the cage was bought he should help select it. They were all very much amused, papa, mamma, and Jess, when he told of having promised me that I should go with him to get the cage. And one thing I will say for my little master,—he was quite conscientious about a promise he made any one. His parents never disappointed him, if it could

be helped, and they always tried to assist him in keeping a promise.

But one thing and another prevented getting the cage, although Davy had been to drive a few times when it was not thought best to take him from the carriage. Then one soft, sweet day in September, I was taken in my little master's hands to the carriage to visit the store where cages were sold. Then a most remarkable thing happened, one for which I have always been much happier.

Thomas carried Davy—still holding me—from the carriage to the store, placing him in an armchair while he was shown the different cages. All at once a little girl limped in. In an instant I saw that it was Gretchie. So glad I was to see her that I chirped loudly. She turned, and looked at me. "Oh," she exclaimed, "that looks exactly like my dear little birdie that was stolen away last summer!"

Mrs. Graham heard what she said, and asked if her birdie's name was Billy Trill. Gretchen shook her fair head. "No, I never called him that," she said. You will remember that Gretchie had never heard the name. But all she said made Mrs. Graham feel that I really had been her bird, and that those boys had stolen me. And although I should have felt very badly then to have left the Grahams, even for pleasant Sunfleck Cottage, I could not help acting as though I knew the little girl who had been so very kind to me.

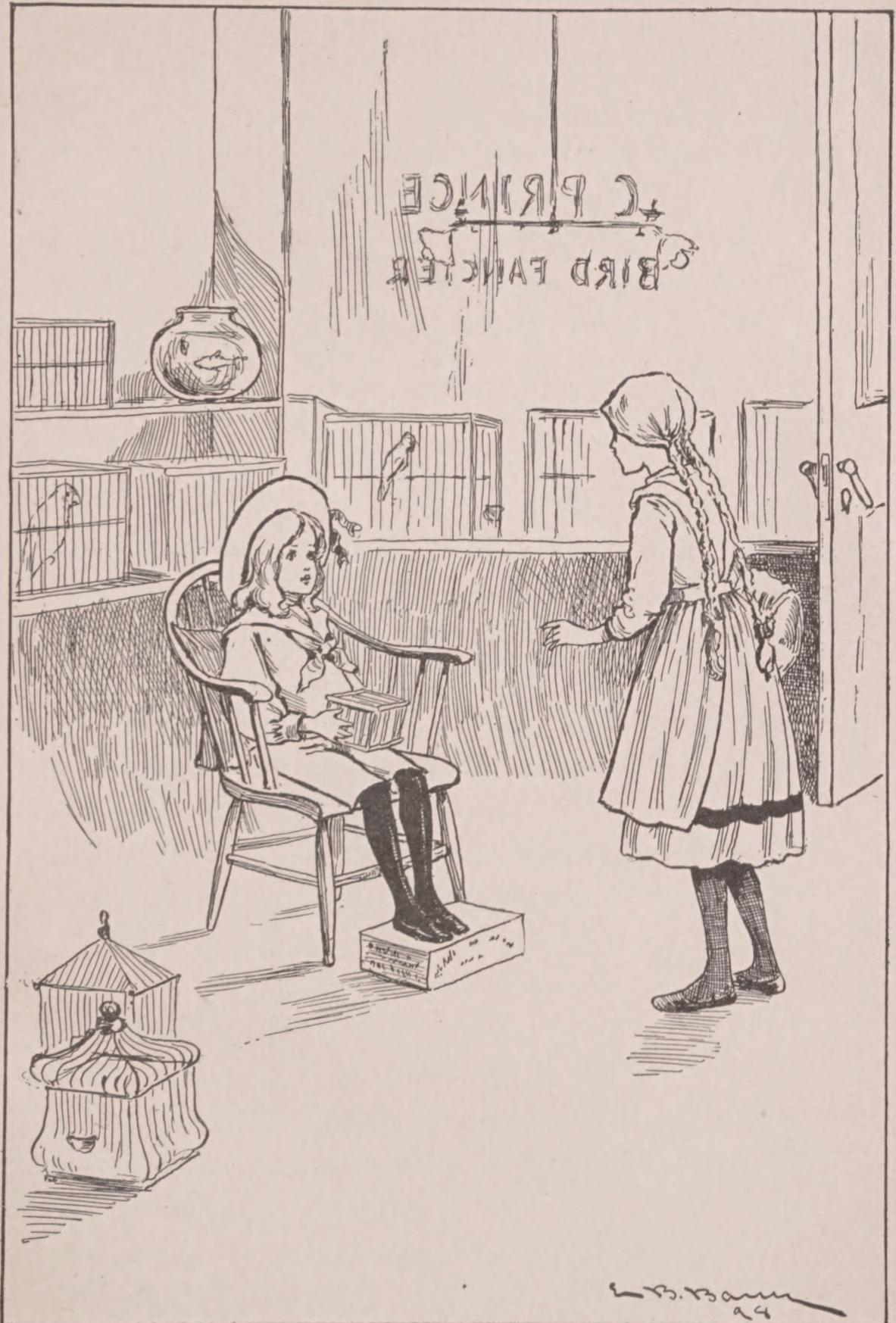
So what was my great joy when Mrs. Graham said

that Davy had become so fond of me that it would break his heart to give me up, but she should insist on giving Gretchie another bird, and a pretty new cage, also! The man where we were had a few choice canaries for sale, and Mrs. Graham bought a fine singer, which was put into a shining cage and ordered to be sent to Gretchie's home. Then she asked Gretchie if she should feel perfectly satisfied.

"Oh, more than satisfied!" she replied, clasping her hands before her, as she always did when much pleased. "I was always afraid Billy might belong to some one else, but this new birdie shall be another Dicky for me, and I shall know he is my very own." So she bade me good-bye, with a happy face, and limped off with a half hop, forgetting, in her joy, to go slowly when away from home.

There was just one elegant cage in the store with white and gilt "trimmings," and here and there a little shading of brown. Davy said it just matched me, and so it was bought. This cage has been my home for seven years. Once in that time, it was sent away for a few days, then came back all freshly gilded and tinted.

I had not been Davy's little bird very long, when my cage was hung on the piazza one day, and beside it was another beautiful cage, with a pretty yellow bird inside. This was Trippit, the other canary. You can imagine how happy I was to find myself in the company of one of my own family. We became acquainted at once. And a dear, sweet little creature



GRETCHIE AGAIN.



I found Trippit to be. She was not very strong, however, and did not sing. But it set her going a little to hear me, and once in awhile we sing a little duet. Davy keeps as still as a mouse when we do, and says it is the sweetest of music to his ears.

Daddy Rex is the most perfect gentleman of a dog I ever saw. The first time I appeared on the piazza he eyed me a bit jealously, as if he considered me a stranger, and so he growled in a way to make my little canary heart flutter. But his master — who, by the way, has dark, fine eyes, that even a bird can see mean character back of them — said, soberly: “Now, now! None of that, Rex, old boy! Little Billy Trill is one of us now, and if you worry him I shall be very apt to ‘make you dance canary.’”

I almost laughed, that sounded so funny. But I found that one of the wisest of people that ever lived and wrote, a man called Shakespeare, says somewhere, “And make you dance canary, with sprightly fire and motion,” so I think perhaps a lively dance was once named for us sprightly little fellows.

One day Trippit was so sick that our kind mistress sprinkled some yellowish powder into warm water, which she called “mustard water.” Into this she put Trippit’s little claws and legs. Trippit told me afterwards I wouldn’t have believed how good it felt, although it burned a little. Then she gave her two drops of smooth medicine, called “castor oil.”

Trippit had seemed so sick, and huddled so close to a corner of her cage that day, that I dreaded to see

her the next morning. But—would you believe it?—she was so much better that we sang a short duet, to Davy's delight.

We are such a peaceful family that life seems to me like a pleasant dream. Trippit says it seems so to her. I think she grows stronger all the time. I love little Trippit very dearly.

I am no longer a very young bird. I have learned a good deal in my life thus far, and as canaries are said to live fifteen or sixteen years, or even longer, I may live long enough to become a very wise bird.

I do not stay in my cage all the time. Very often I fly all about the room, stopping sometimes to nibble at a lump of sugar on Davy's shoulder, and,—can you believe me?—with Mammy Moll lying on the floor, her sleepy eyes half open, I am not in the least afraid to perch on the arm of a chair, within reach of a quick spring. I know in my little heart that Mammy would not harm me. And Daddy Rex is never happier than when his great, shaggy lordship is lolling on the beautiful hearth-rug in the up-stairs sitting-room. He and Mammy Moll often go to sleep side by side.

In cold weather there is a lovely fire in the great open fireplace, and I have seen Daddy Rex fast asleep on the rug many a time, with two or three of Mammy Moll's kittens racing and frisking about all over him. The nearest approach I have ever seen here to anything like a quarrel, I must tell you about. Davy screamed with laughter, and I felt my little round

sides puff out with what, I think, were kind of inside giggles. A canary can't laugh out, you know.

One cold day, Jess, the nurse, brought three pretty kittens, only a few weeks old, and very cunning, to the sitting-room, for Davy to play with. Mammy Moll was purring before the fire, and, after the little kits had frolicked in Davy's chair until they were tired, down they scrambled and over to the rug, where they went to sleep on one corner. Pretty soon in strode Daddy Rex. The kittens were in a droll little heap on the shaded border of the rug, which matched the colour of their coats, and, for once, great, splendid Daddy did not see them. What happened the next moment, I am sure he could not imagine.

Mammy Moll, with her back pointed up just like a camel's in Davy's Noah's ark, and with her tail for all the world exactly like the round brush they clean the lamp chimneys with, flew at Daddy in the most unladylike manner, and first spit in his face, then clawed him sharply, at the same time giving the most piercing "me-ouw!" Meantime, a little squally chorus of squeaks and squeals from under him made poor Daddy bound to the floor, *his* tail held out straight, his ears cocked high, and giving a long, low growl, that sent Mammy Moll's babies rushing to her in great affright.

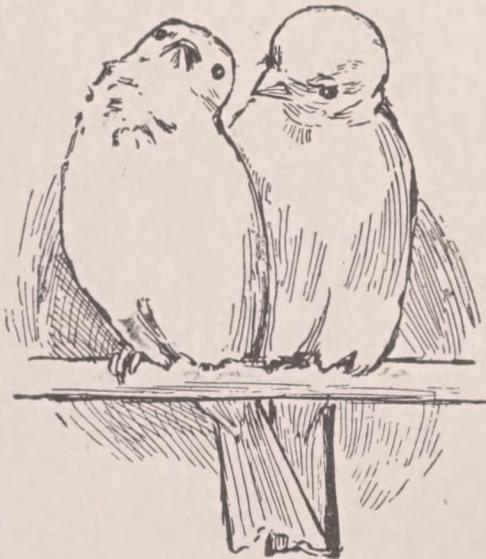
It was all over in a moment, but Daddy Rex's visit up-stairs was spoiled for that day, and with a most dignified, injured air he turned and left the room.

Now, in the midst of great plenty, great content-

ment, and the best of care, I think that little Billy Trill will have to say "Good-bye." I hope and expect to end my days in this best of places, my own "home, sweet home."

Davy has long since become like other boys, and while he loves me still, and I think always will love me, I rejoice with all my little heart that he can come and go, spending his schoolboy days more happily than most lads who have never known what it is *not* to be able to run about freely, and as they pleased.

Let the little people remember that resolving to do the best I could proved a great blessing to me. That love and kindness are the best things there are in the world. And that there is a great and good Being, who cares for the birds, and wants them always to be treated with thoughtfulness and kindly care.









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